

Shane Varga Update: "It's a title fight."  
*June 5, 2009 by Shane Varga*

Three down, nine treatments to go.

The next several weeks will be crucial for me. I will have my fourth treatment on June 12th and right after that I will have another PET scan to see the progress of my treatments. Those results will determine the remainder of my treatments. The incredibly large mass in my chest is what will determine the next steps. If the mass shrinks to one smaller mass, I will probably need to undergo radiation along with chemotherapy. If the large mass turns out to be two enlarged lymph nodes rather than one, then I just continue the chemotherapy.

Chemotherapy works by targeting fast growing cells. This is why most patients get severe nausea (stomach cells being destroyed and the poison from the dead cancer cells being released into the system) and lose their hair. Chemo actually melts away the cancerous masses and cells. The mass in my chest is so large that chemo alone would not be able to get to the core to completely destroy it. There is just too much to melt away.

After a little over a month with my battle, I would have to say things are going better than I thought they would. Things seem to be getting better rather than worse and I think it might be because I am getting used to what my "new normal" is. There have not been many surprises with side effects lately. I have 50% at best, of my usual energy, stamina, and strength and that is that. I can still do almost anything, but just not as long or as well as I had in the past. For example, I could go jogging, but I can go about one lap compared to several miles. Then my body is done until I am regenerated which takes longer also. It took me a while to accept it, but I look at it as a new challenge. I think it is an excellent opportunity to really test what the body is capable of.

So many people struggle with treatments and their bodies are torn down to the point of near immobility. I feel so blessed to be able to even consider exercising or being active enough to push myself a little. Is it the best idea to push myself when my body is broken down? Probably not. However, if this is the fight of my life, then this must be my title fight. In many title fights, the two opponents feel each other out for several rounds before they have a sense of what the other fighter is capable of. The first few rounds are over in my opinion, cancer felt me out a little, I felt it back... and I am not that impressed with what cancer has in order to try and defeat me. I was cautious and fearful of my disease to start my fight. It has not and will not be easy, but I am learning that despite all that, it could be a whole lot worse. I fully intend to push myself to see what I have deep down and do things you are not supposed to be capable of doing through treatments. Just like a champion fighter, I will dig deeper than I have ever.

No longer do I want to just beat cancer, I now have a goal to embarrass it's very name for choosing me!

Shane Varga Update: "I feel  
like I got a part of my old self  
back."